The Singing Voice and the Printing Press. Itineraries of the Altissimo's Performed Texts in Renaissance Italy

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In the early sixteenth century, the Altissimo was one of the major Italian oral poets: a laureate cantastorie *singing his 'improvised' lyrical and narrative poems in Florence and in Venice, and publishing them in printed editions which often present their texts as live transcriptions of his performances. By analysing these editions (including a newly discovered booklet – his earliest known edition), this essay aims to investigate the Altissimo's techniques of oral composition, his catalogue of subjects and styles, his sources and models, and the relations between the oral performance and the written transmission of his poetry.*

The essay also highlights the striking similarities that the Altissimo's complex and multifaceted profile – which blended literature and music, fine arts and eclectic learning, performing skills and commercial enterprise, genius and craftsmanship – shares with figures such as Leonardo da Vinci, Pietro Aretino, Niccolò degli Agostini, and Niccolò Zoppino. The canonical perception of each of them as an artist, a writer, or a publisher is reassessed in the light of the clues that reveal their activity as oral performers, thus showing how pivotal and permeating oral poetry was in early modern Italian culture.

KEYWORDS: *oral poetry, improvisation, street singers, publisher-booksellers,* cantari, *artist-poets*

In March 1515, the Florentine publisher Bernardo Giunta dedicated his edition of Sannazaro's *Arcadia* to a poet who in his opinion could protect the work of the Neapolitan author, still little known in Florence, under the aegis of his own name, which was, on the contrary, resounding everywhere in the city. His name was the 'Altissimo':

> Bernardo di Philippo di Giunta al suo Altissimo Poeta S[alutem]
> Non è cosa, Venerando Poeta Altissimo, che da me si possa prestare inverso la vostra excellentia, quanto che, in quel modo che mi è concesso, attendere che il vostro nome, nella Ciptà di Fiorenza assai ormai risonante, all'orechie dell'altre parte di Italia onorevolmente pervenga [...]. Per la qual cosa, avendo noi a' giorni passati nella nostra stamperia i versi e prosa del Sannazaro Napoletano, uomo doctissimo, diligentemente impresso, vogliamo che sotto il vostro nome, come sotto un fortissimo scudo, eschino fuora alle mani degli altri lettori.[1]

Cristofano Fiorentino called l'Altissimo was a *canterino* or *cantimbanco*, that is to say a poet performer, a street singer, and improviser: a kind of poet whom nowadays nobody is likely to equate with, let alone prefer to, one of the major models of literary classicism in Renaissance Italy. Still, the Florentines who

could listen in person to the poems he was singing extempore were so fond of the Altissimo that Giunta could confidently entrust 'vostra excellentia' with the patronage of Sannazzaro's masterpiece. So impressive were his performances, that he was even laureate – although we do not know when and where. Nevertheless, the enchanting power of the voice has physical limits that only the pen – or type – can surpass: throughout Giunta's dedication, almost all the references to the Altissimo's art and success belong to an aural semantic field, but, as its conclusion approaches, they give way for a moment to words relating to writing, and more precisely to printing:

> Pregandovi che ancora voi le vostre fatiche e vigilie a essere impresse ci accomodiate, accioché quegli che non possono in presentia el vostro improviso udire, al manco negli scripti cognoschino che non senza cagione la Ciptà di Fiorenza vi porta singularissimo amore.

In order to extend the Altissimo's fame beyond the city walls, the publisher advised him to spread his poems 'negli scripti' and offered him the family press. It is not easy to say whether this is a real request or an artful advertisement. Maybe the Giunta family never did print an edition of the Altissimo's poems afterwards, or maybe they were already about to print it and in fact did so, but now it is completely lost.

What is certain is that in the following years the Altissimo really went beyond Florence, but he did not simply circulate in printed books: he also physically moved from one city to another. On 10 May 1518, during the big fair held in the days around the feast of the Ascension ('la Sensa'), the Altissimo

appeared in Venice, where the chronicler and diarist Marin Sanudo listened to him reciting 'all'improvvisa' a *cantare* on the human soul to the musical accompaniment of a *lira* player. The large audience of Piazza San Marco enjoyed the show, and the final collection gathered good money, so that the Altissimo promised to come back another time:

> In questo zorno, in Terra nuova, dove si leze publice, uno fiorentino poeta venuto in questa terra a la Sensa, chiamato lo Altissimo [...] montò in cariega facendo adunar gran numero di auditori [...]; il qual recita versi a l'improvisa, uno sona la lira e lui li recita. Comenzò prima voler dir in laude di questa terra; poi entrò con dir li era stà posto una poliza su la scuola dovesse dir di anima, et cussì intrò a dir di anima, ma judicio meo fu cossa fata a man e composta a Fiorenza, perché disse bene. Poi mandò una confetiera atorno zerchando danaro, e trovò certo numero, dicendo un'altra fiata diria a l'improvisa.[2]

The performances of his *cantari* seem to follow much the same protocol in the *Primo libro de' Reali*, a very long chivalric narrative in *ottava rima*, which is by far the most interesting of Cristofano l'Altissimo's works, extremely rich as it is in information about his culture and his techniques.[3] The Altissimo sang his verses in the *piazza*, mixing entertainment, communication, and information for an audience of citizens and craftsmen, as they left their shops and offices in the evening, as well as many ladies. Even if a *canterino* could sing from memory texts written by other poets as well as by himself *before* the performance, one of the special skills of the Altissimo and his past and future peers was indeed the

composition of their poems *in* performance. Telling stories by means of improvised verses ('Improviso istorie dir', *Primo libro*, I. 12. 5) was their peculiar art.

We do not know much about poetic improvisation in the Renaissance,[4] but the text of the *Primo libro* can provide some interesting clues. The basic requirement was an ability to think in verse, a trait that was not unusual at the time, achieved by memorizing popular and literary texts and metabolizing them until they became one's own language: a ready-to-use poetic material stored in the poet's mind. A remarkable part of the Altissimo's verses can be analysed in terms of 'formulae' and 'themes'. Indeed, the high density and variety of recurrent half-lines and combinatorial patterns of verbal permutations recommend his *cantari* as an ideal testing ground to check the suitability of the 'oral-formulaic theory' for Italian medieval and early modern street singers of tales.[5] I will not take on this challenge on this occasion, but a point is already clear: the Altissimo's rhapsodic composition relies not only on the deployment of a traditional idiom inherited from the previous generations of *canterini*, but also on the imitation of the written verses of several lettered authors, from Dante and Petrarch to Poliziano and Pulci; thus he creates his very personal idiolect and develops his individual artistry. This is likely to be a typical process in a residually oral culture, where oral compositions and the written tradition continuously interact and intertwine in a productive synergy.[6]

In order to improvise short and highly formalized verse such as lyric poems, internalizing previous poetry could suffice. For longer texts (an average *cantare* lasts for 40 stanzas, i.e. 320 lines), the issue is more complex and

challenging. As many medieval and early modern Italian cases suggest, it was rather usual for the poet to rely on a pre-existing text in prose. One of the main roles of a *canterino* was in fact that of flavouring existing stories with rhythm and rhyme, disseminating them through voice and music. So, the main source of the *Primo libro de' Reali* is (not by chance) the first book of the *Reali di Francia*, a prose chivalric romance by Andrea da Barberino, and one of the most popular Italian books of all time, reprinted uninterruptedly from 1491 (Modena: Petrus Maufer) to the 1960s.[7] By faithfully versifying it, the Altissimo derives a considerable, though not predominant, portion of his chivalric 'register', and the largest portion of the themes and story-patterns that he goes on developing, one instalment after the other.

Barberino's story is nevertheless abundantly enriched and varied by means of the frequent amplifications and digressions that the performer was able to put on display, drawing on them from his own omnivorous and up-to-date collection of topics, ranging from ancient history to anatomy, from theology to artillery, from moral philosophy to nautical science. So the Altissimo could turn into verse a Neoplatonic treatise of Marsilio Ficino on God and the human soul, as well as the captions of a woodcut showing the Zodiac man.[8] The *canterino* turns out to be, and is proud of being, an encyclopaedic educator and entertainer, a liminal mediator between learned and popular culture, between orality and literacy.

A question, at this point, is urgent: how were these oral *cantari* turned into written texts? The words of the Altissimo's shows are recorded in a posthumous edition printed in Venice in 1534.[9] Its preface 'Alli lettori' (fol. A2^{r}) claims that

the printed text of the ninety-four *cantari* is taken from the transcriptions made by some admirers during a long cycle of performances of the improviser in Florence.

> Ne' preteriti anni, con non picciola difficultà, ho rinvenute alcune bellissime opere del benemerito Laureato Poeta Cristoforo detto Altissimo Fiorentino, dalla cui viva voce, nella vaga et inclita città di Firenze, ad uso di improviso son sute reccitate; [...] da la vaghissima dilettation delle quali astretti, molti amatori di tal virtù in que' tempi che per lui erano cantate, in secreto et in palese, scrivendo sopra fogli e pezzi di carta, da quelli furono celermente raccolte.

Many scholars, including myself, have doubted these claims. Nonetheless, some unusual features of this very long text give them credence.

For instance, it is quite normal for some stanzas, sometimes in large chunks, to be recycled more than once in the *Primo libro* or in different works by the Altissimo.[10] This can be surprising for those who are accustomed to the literate logic of chivalric poems composed in writing, but it is perfectly usual in the oral composition. Together with some opening octaves, this repetition affects several epic, lyrical, and even educational 'themes', such as the 'encouragement of the captain', the 'clash of the armies', the 'gory battlefield', the 'monologue of a besieged king', the '(meta)physics of love', and the 'operation of Providence'. For the most part, the Altissimo had a written prototype to rely upon, especially when the recurrent episode is particularly long and elaborated, such as his astonishing 'ships in a sea storm', a *pièce de résistance* spiced with countless nautical terms that could last for dozens of stanzas, which appears twice in the

Primo libro. Each time it is a 'repeat performance', with occasional variations, of well-tested (and possibly well-appreciated) stock numbers. Not by chance, this recycling practice seems to anticipate that of the future *comici dell'arte*, based on repertoires drawn from diverse written and oral sources and stored in their commonplace books; but it is also worth noting that much the same habit has been described for courtier poets such as Tebaldeo and Serafino Aquilano, who were able to 'farsi bell[i] per un anno' simply reciting, at suitable intervals of time, 'per diversi modi' one and the same 'sentenza'.[11]

Further – and decisive – proof of live recording appears in the presence of blatant contradictions, barefaced lies, and embarrassing memory lapses on the poet's part, 'bloopers' or on-the-air mistakes whose conservation would be inexplicable in a poem composed and revised in writing. Elsewhere, the link with recitation is confirmed by the use of a gestural deixis in phrases meant to describe a movement or a position, such 'ei fe' *così*' or 'lo colpì *qua*', which are meaningless without further explanation: the actual meaning was in fact in the hands of the Altissimo, who was miming the action. Another remarkable feature is that the transcriptions preserve the exact appointments he arranged with his audience, as he signs off each episode of the *Primo libro,* so that we are able to reconstruct the entire season schedule of its ninety-four *cantari*, performed in the premier location of Piazza San Martino from Sunday 4 June 1514 to Sunday 8 July 1515. Significantly, Giunta's dedication of the *Arcadia* was written precisely during that period.[12]

In Renaissance Italy, transcriptions from the author's voice (also known as *reportationes*) were quite common, as they had been in the previous centuries, for

the sermons of the most acclaimed preachers, such as Savonarola; later on, in the eighteenth century, they were used for 'pirating' the poems of the most renowned improvisers, such as Bernardino Perfetti. For Renaissance popular poetry the examples are few and little known, yet they reveal a long-lasting practice. Already in 1435, indeed, a quarrel broke out between Michele del Giogante and Niccolò Cieco, simply because the famous blind *canterino* refused to let his friend Michele transcribe the stanzas he was singing and improvising in San Martino.[13] However, as the *editio princips* of his *Rotta di Ravenna* discussed below suggests, the records of the Altissimo's shows were probably allowed and even used by him. Nevertheless, his *Primo libro de' Reali* remained unpublished until the poet's death, possibly because he did not want to make his stock treasures – so abundantly recorded in it – available to his competitors. Finally, in 1534 they were edited and published by Giovanni Manenti, a friend of the Altissimo (and of Pietro Aretino as well), whom I have identified through his publisher's device and who managed the first lotteries in Venice, staged comedies (including Machiavelli's *Mandragola*), composed poems, and published several books. Possibly he was the same 'Gian Manente' whose improvised poems had formerly delighted Pope Leo X in Rome: if so, he would have been a very well-matched partner for the Altissimo. Thanks to Manenti, one of the longest and richest samples of Renaissance oral poetry has been saved in a printed book.[14]

This fruitful alliance between orality and typography in the first decades of the Gutenberg era is hardly surprising, if one considers how promptly and actively poet-performers were involved in publishing and selling printed pamphlets and books. Recent studies by Rosa Salzberg and Massimo Rospocher have outlined

many figures of charlatan-publishers, especially in Northern Italy, while the profile of a Florentine *canterino* publisher exactly contemporary to the Altissimo, Zanobi della Barba, has been sketched recently by Marco Villoresi.[15] The most emblematic fact, however, is that the very introduction of the art of printing to Florence is linked to the enterprise of an eminent *canterino*, musician, singer, and *extemporalis poeta*, Antonio di Guido, a favourite of the popular audience in Piazza San Martino and highly appreciated by Lorenzo il Magnifico, who enjoyed his performances both in *palazzo* and in *villa*. He was a friend of Luigi Pulci, who probably caricatured him in the half-giant Margutte of his mock-chivalric poem *Morgante*, and also a friend of Poliziano, who celebrated Antonio as superior even to Orpheus, since the ancient Thracian poet simply attracted the beasts, while the modern Tuscan *canterino* was able to gather crowds of humans: 'Tuscus ab Othrysio, Fabiane, Antonius Orpheo | Hoc differt: homines hic trahit, ille feras'.[16] In any case, this Tuscan Orpheus turned out to have been also the publisher of the *editio princeps* of Boccaccio's *Decameron* and probably of a *Terentius* and an *Epistole ed Evangeli* as well, all of them printed in Florence in the early 1470s.[17]

Being professional entertainers, the *canterini* would always earn their living with poetry, considering literature as a means of support, so that we find them in the vanguard in their use of the new medium. Printing was at the least a relatively cheap way of obtaining many copies of their texts which they could then sell at the end of the show, using their art of verbal persuasion to transform their listeners into customers. Some of them, however, from Antonio di Guido to Zoppino, appear to have been interested in printing on a greater scale, not only peddling chapbooks, but also dealing in (and with) longer and more complex and

prestigious (and more expensive) works, fostering the diffusion of vernacular literature. The wide range of their literary interests is reflected in the variety of their poetic production, which included *canzoni*, sonnets, *strambotti* and *capitoli*, *laude* and *sacre rappresentazioni*, *trionfi* and *canti carnascialeschi*, *farse* and *commedie*, and – of course – *cantari* in *ottava rima* on many different matters. Cristofano l'Altissimo is no exception: the richness of his repertoire appears in the many amplifications and digressions of the *Primo libro* as well as in the different poems he had printed during his life. More than once, in fact, taking Giunta's advice to heart, the Altissimo himself was the publisher of his own works.

On 23 January 1516, he obtained from the Florentine Signoria the privilege to 'imprimere et imprimi facere' the '*Excidium Ravennense* noviter rithmis nostro vulgari idiomate editum per Altissimum florentinum'.[18] This was his war poem in *ottava rima* about the battle of Ravenna fought in April 1512, which he possibly sung in April 1515. The edition he planned in the following January is almost certainly the one printed a few months later with the title *La rotta di Ravenna, cantata in san Martino di Fiorenza all'improviso dal Altissimo poeta florentino, poeta laureato: copiata dalla viva voce da varie persone mentre cantava* ([Florence]: Alessandro Rosselli, [1516]), and reprinted at least four times in the mid-sixteenth century. Like many of his colleagues, he was not only a storyteller: he was also a news reporter. This was a crucial function in the frantic and uncertain age of the Italian wars, when the continual battles between the ever-changing coalitions provoked a growing request for information and explanation, which found a prompt and abundant response in the activity of numerous street singers, who publicly reported and commented on the events in dozens of war

poems. Like the *Primo libro*, the printed text of the *Rotta* appears to issue from the *piazza* in a rather direct way.

Moreover, the storyteller and news reporter was a singer of love poetry. On 1 September 1519 it was the turn of Venice to grant to 'Christophoro nominato lo Altissimo Poeta' a privilege for two books that he 'desidera[va] far stampar de qui et venderle', namely the 'Historia de Anthenore' and an 'Opereta de capitoli sonetti et stantie'.[19] The *Antenore* – possibly an epic relating to the Matter of Troy – is now lost, but the 'Opereta' can be positively identified with the *Opera dello Altissimo* printed in Venice in the early 1520s, a collection of *Sonetti, capitoli e strambotti* which was also published in Florence in 1525. The Florentine edition lacks not only the eight 'epigrammi' included in the Venetian edition, but above all the intriguing appendix of poems in praise of the author gathered in the quire signed I. Even if the collection of poems is basically identical, therefore, the Venetian volume appears to be an expanded and ultimate version of the Florentine one (or maybe, of an earlier edition now lost – possibly printed by Giunta?).[20]

The Altissimo's book of verse is perfectly in tune with the fashion of *poesia cortigiana* prevailing in the Italian printed book trade in the first decades of the sixteenth century. Dozens of *Opere* or *Opere nove* were published, composed by a good number of poet-singers and *lira* players – often expressly presented as improvisers – such as Benedetto Gareth called il Cariteo, Panfilo Sasso, Francesco Cei, Bernardo Accolti called l'Unico Aretino, the Notturno Napoletano, Olimpo da Sassoferrato, and many other followers of the leader Serafino Aquilano, a great lute player and singer-songwriter, half busker, half pop

star, who died before his time at the age of thirty-five.[21] This was, then, a nationwide movement of poets who loved to impress their public with the special effects of stylistic devices and exuberant speech, and who left aside the complex schemes of *canzoni*, while showing a clear preference for simple, modular, and easy-to-sing forms, such as the sonnet, the *terza rima* used in *capitoli* and eclogues, and most of all the *ottava rima* of the *strambotti*, which were already very popular in late fourteenth-century Florence, and cultivated by Lorenzo de' Medici, Poliziano, and Pulci.

The relationship of this type of poetry with public performances is evident and well documented, and it is also frequently displayed by the woodcuts on title pages, usually portraying the poet-lover in the act of singing while playing the *lira* or a similar stringed instrument. Furthermore, in the case of the Altissimo's collection, this relationship is expressly stated in the foreword, significantly addressed by an obscure Tommaso Macianghini to the 'auditori' of the poet:

> Tomaso Macianghini agli auditori de lo Altissimo Poeta. Salute.
> Sendo lui cesato dal cantare improviso, e visto con quanta avidità e piacere voi vi dilectavi pascere gli orechi vostri de' frutti, anzi più presto delle foglie, che cascavano ne' sua facundissimi orti; […] mi ha fatto certo più desideroso a racorre, delle mani di questi tali, essi – ancora che dallo autore exclusi e dannati – versi, e restituirli al grado loro, facendone, per mezo della stampa, partecipe non solo voi, ma qualcuno altro, qui e altrove; aciò che quello che piaceva in publico e delettava, possa ancora delettare e piaciere in privato. (fol. A1^{v})

The idea of using the printing press to reach not only the Altissimo's listeners, but also 'qualcun altro, qui e altrove' seems to be a direct echo of Giunta's advice, but the most interesting point is that the printed poems are offered to his former audience in the hope that they will appreciate in private the texts they have already appreciated in public. We do not know why the Altissimo was forced to stop his improvised singing (the foreword mentions only an enigmatic 'pravità'), but it is clear that he sang his lyric poems as well as his *cantari*. There is even some evidence of the flowing of the same extemporary vein in both kinds of texts, but it is hard to tell if the written version of his sonnets, *strambotti*, and *capitoli* owes anything to *reportationes*.

Certainly, the connections between the Altissimo's lyric poetry and his activity as a public performer, together with the direct relationship between the dissemination of his poems in singing and their diffusion in printing, are demonstrated by a small but significant entry that can now be added to his bibliography. This item is a booklet of four pages – two folios – in quarto, that is to say a half-sheet folded in two, containing some amorous rhymes: namely, two *capitoli* in *terza rima* and two sonnets at the end. It can be dated about 1505 and attributed to Florence, but there is no indication of the year, nor of the place of printing, nor of the printer's or bookseller's name: nothing that could suggest where the potential customer could go to buy it. These are the common features of pamphlets intended to be sold at the end of a street singer's show, according to a practice documented not only for the *canterini*-pedlars, but also for higher-rank poets like Serafino.[22] Even the image under the title is typical of this sort of book. It is a woodcut in popular taste though exquisite in technique, unmistakably

Florentine, with a nymph drawn in Botticelli's manner between a shepherd musician and, on the right, a poet, equipped with his trusty *viola da braccio*.

The texts are rare, but some can be traced elsewhere. A copy of the first sonnet, 'Muovesi el buon pastore come apre il giorno' (fol. a2^{v}), can also be found in MS Palatino 277 of the Biblioteca Nazionale of Florence (fol. 55^{r}), copied in the very first years of the sixteenth century together with some poems by two renowned improvisers and courtly entertainers of that time: the Florentine Francesco Cei (two *capitoli,* fols 55^{v}-57^{r}) and l'Unico Aretino, Bernardo Accolti (two sonnets, fol. 57^{v}, and the verse comedy *Virginia*, fols 58^{r}-72^{r}).

No other copies are known of the last sonnet ('La patienza alfin fa l'huom contento', fol. a2^{v}) and of the second *capitolo*, entitled *Philostratus* (fol. a2^{r-v}), although a Bernardo Filostrato, author of the pastoral play *Filolauro* and of an elegy on the death of Giuliano de' Medici, duke of Nemours, appears among the poets praising the Altissimo in the final quire of the Venetian edition of his *Opera* ('Bernar. Philo.', fol. I1^{v}); Filostrato might have been a friend of his, and even a fellow-performer.[23]

However that may be, the most interesting piece is the first, 'Come bravo corsier che sella e morso': a *capitolo* in *terza rima* which addresses to the beloved lady a long and witty plea for mercy. From the 1520s onwards, this poem was to be published among the seven *capitoli* of Cristofano l'Altissimo both in the Venetian and in the Florentine editions of his poems, as well as in later reprints. This earlier version is for the most part almost identical to the later, from the very beginning (ll. 1-3; on the left the '1505' version, fol. a1^{r}, on the right the '1520', fol. F3^{v}):

Come bravo corsier che sella e morso	Come un bravo corsier che sella e morso
spreza, e ’l vil freno e **leve** manto doma	spreza, e vil freno e **fral** manto poi doma
poi l’aspra bocca e l’inflexibil dorso.	l’aspra **suo** boca e ’l **suo** inflessibil dorso.

Nevertheless, some tercets are considerably different, so much so that the earlier version is three lines longer than the following one (184 versus 181), because of a passage in which the discourse and rhyme scheme, toying with the thought of a secret rendezvous with the lady, follow a different course for a while before reuniting, so that lines 118-29 of the first version (fol. a1^{v}, in the left-hand column) become 118-26 in the second (*Opera dello Altissimo,* fols G1^{v}-G2^{r}, in the right-hand column):

A dar*e* iuditio temerario corre	Ad dar giudicio temerario corre
la gente cieca, **nel male assueta**,	**l’implobo** cieco **popular tumulto**
e quel ch’**ha** facto Idio sol **no ’l** può tôrre.	e quel ch’**è** fatto Dio sol **lo** può tôrre.
Ma s’tu **se’ saggia, provida e discreta,**	
prima ch’alcuno el mie desir*e* **si scuopra**	Ma s’tu **ripari all’**ardor **ch’i’ ho sculto**
tra’mi d’affanno, e fa che sie secreta.	**nelle viscere, e solvi i mei** tormenti,
Non dubitar*e* ch’ogni **caso et** ogni **opra**	**sarà secreto** ogni **nostro consulto.**
che tra noi de’ seguir*e* giamai si senti,	
se tu vorrai, se non per quel di sopra.	
Mitiga adunche **e mie sospiri** ardenti!	**Consenti** adunque ai mei desir, consenti!
Non mi negar*e* le tue luce amorose!	Consenti a me le tuo lucie amorose!
Pon fine al pianto **mio** ed a’ tormenti!	Pon fine al pianto **al foco** e a’ **lamenti**!

Variations of this kind are likely to be connected to different performances or, at least, to different periods in the life of the poet-singer. The poet, however, is clearly the same. Not by chance, the author of this chapbook is named Cristofano as well, although in the first decade of the century he was not yet nicknamed the 'Altissimo', he was not yet acclaimed as the highest-ranking *canterino* in the marketplace. He will stand out as a superlative poet *all'improvviso* only some years later: at this time, he is rather introduced to the reader as 'Cristofano scultore': *Capitolo primo composto per Christophano sculptore* is in fact the title above the woodcut (Fig. 1).[24]

When he made his début, therefore, poetry was only a second job for the young Cristofano: his first job, the one after which he named himself, was sculpture. The Altissimo, at the beginning, was an artist; and the *Primo libro de' Reali*, upon closer inspection, confirms this information in many ways. For instance, there is a lively half-stanza that portrays an amusing scene of everyday life in a sculptor's workshop. It is a simile describing Ricieri, who is teaching king Fiovo how to butcher enemies: he is compared to a master who snatches the work out of his stunned apprentice's hands and skilfully hits the piece to show him the ropes:

> Fece Ricier come fa un maestro
> che vede un suo discepol che cincischia,
> che gli toglie il lavoro e, pronto e destro,
> sei colpi vi dà su, finché s'arrischia. (*Primo libro*, XLV. 10. 1-4)

But most of all, confirmation comes from the Altissimo's amazing *nottomie*: deadly strokes that turn the conclusion of some duels of the unbeatable Ricieri into sheer anatomical dissections. By virtue of the inventive artifice of framing the scene from the cutting edge of the sword or from the point of view of its point, the Altissimo inlays in his chivalric *cantari* a description both of the anatomy of the head, from the scalp down to the trachea, through every single layer of the brain (*Primo libro*, LXII. 23-25), and of the anatomy of the eye, whose membranes are numbered as the weapon perforates them:

> E Ricier li passò la mano e 'l guanto,
> e la spada gli entrò per la visiera.
> Succhiellando, più là entrònne alquanto
> e passò le palpèbre come cera
> dell'occhio manco, e 'l sangue fuor zampilla
> quando e' giunse dell'occhio alla pupilla.
>
> E la pupilla, l'ivia e la cornèa,
> la scrinotica, e poi la secondina
> tunica li passò, e l'aranea;
> e passata la tunica retìna,
> la punta acuta, impetüosa e rea,
> per queste sette tuniche camina.
> Ruppe l'osso dell'occhio, e giunse poi
> dove e nervi ottici entran tutti duoi;

e quali hanno figura d'un 'a' greco,

e dan virtute al viso, e gli divise;

onde che Alialchin rimase cieco. (*Primo libro,* LXV. 17. 3-19. 3)

Such flaunting of arcane terms and esoteric knowledge, aimed more at dazzling than at enlightening the Florentine audience, implies a medical expertise that brings to mind the typical profile of a charlatan, a category of street performers closely related to the *canterini*, and often combined in the same person. In those years, nonetheless, the greatest anatomical researchers were in fact artists: artist-scientists such as Leonardo da Vinci, who owned the same treatises on medicine used by the Altissimo, such as the *Anathomia a capite usque ad pedes* by Mondino de' Liucci included in Ketham's *Fasciculus*.[25] Significantly, the Altissimo's *nottomie* could be very appropriately illustrated with some of Leonardo's famous anatomical drawings, such as the study of the layers of the brain and scalp (Windsor Castle, Royal Library, 12603^{r}) and those of the eyeballs and cranial nerves (12602^{r} and 19052^{r}), which are probably the first graphical representation of the optic chiasma, the conjunction between the two optical nerves that, in the Altissimo's words, has 'la figura d'un "a" greco'.[26]

The affinities between Cristofano and Leonardo are clear, but they go even further, since Leonardo – even though this is less well known – was a singer of poems, too. In the late fifteenth century, indeed, he was famous for his skills as a 'musico' quite as much as for those as a painter, and he sang finely *ad lyram*. That is what we find in such reliable sources as – in reverse chronological order – the Anonimo Gaddiano, the historian Paolo Giovio, and the mathematician Luca

Pacioli. According to the first (*c.* 1540), Leonardo was ‘eloquente nel parlare, et raro sonatore di lira’; or, even better, ‘unico [...] in sonare tale extrumento’; Giovio confirms (about 1523-27) that ‘cum [...] ad lyram [...] scite caneret, cunctis per omnem aetatem principibus mire placuit’ (‘since he sang skilfully to the lyre, all princes at all times greatly admired him’); while already in 1509 Pacioli, one of Leonardo’s best friends, had proclaimed him ‘degnissimo pictore, prospectivo, architecto, musico’.[27]

Singing *ad lyram*, in the language of the time, was a codified expression implying musical and verbal improvisation: such a meaning is made explicit by Vasari, in whose account Leonardo becomes no less than the best declaimer of improvised poetry in his day:

> Dette alquanto d’opera alla musica, ma tosto si risolvé a imparare a sonare la lira, […] onde sopra quella cantò divinamente allo improviso. […] Fu condotto a Milano con gran riputazione Lionardo a ’l Duca, il quale si dilettava del suono de la lira, perché sonasse: e Lionardo […] superò tutti i musici, che quivi erano concorsi a sonare. Oltra ciò fu il migliore dicitore di rime a l’improviso del tempo suo.[28]

Unfortunately, no piece of poetry definitely attributable to Leonardo has survived; and yet there are plenty of artists whose poems have been written and printed in early modern Italy. Their family is a rather large and noble one, as it includes great masters like Michelangelo, Raffaello, Bramante, Bronzino, and others: and it is overall a very interesting family from our point of view, since in

the early Cinquecento (and onwards) its members are often linked to music and recitation.[29]

In particular, amidst the various figures of artists-poets of that time, the name of *Cristofano scultore fiorentino* irresistibly calls to mind that of *Pietro pittore aretino*, who will later become simply Pietro Aretino, one of the major writers of the Italian Renaissance. The similarities between the cultural profiles of Pietro and Cristofano are impressive. In 1512, when Pietro Aretino was still an 'adolescente' apprentice in Perugia (to be precise, he was twenty), he made his literary début with an *Opera nova di strambotti, sonetti, e capitoli* which displays a remarkable affinity, even in minor details of style and language, with Cristofano's own productions.[30] Such an affinity is materially confirmed by a minor Florentine edition of another work in *ottava rima* by the Altissimo, published in 1524, the *Bellezze di una donna*; here the main text is followed by thirty-two *strambotti* whose authors are not named in the book. Yet they can be identified as not only Lorenzo il Magnifico and Serafino Aquilano, but also Pietro (pittore) Aretino: on folios $b2^{r}$-3^{r}, four *strambotti* from his *Opera nova* are reprinted.[31]

Further evidence seems to connect Aretino's *Opera nova* with performing poetry. Its publisher was Niccolò de' Rossi called 'lo Zoppino', who was both one of the major vernacular publishers and one of the most renowned *cantimpanca* of the early sixteenth century, an itinerant charlatan and singer of poetry celebrated by Teofilo Folengo, Francisco Delicado, and above all, and not by chance, by Pietro Aretino. The multiple personality disorder which has long affected Zoppino in today's scholarship is a telling example of the traps into which a present-day

approach to early modern street performers can fall. Even though his two professions are perfectly compatible with each other, and indeed deeply interwoven, book historians have felt so embarrassed before his twofold nature that they have split him in two: the highly respectable Venetian publisher and the shabby itinerant performer. Hopefully, recent archival discoveries will solve the question once and for all, given that they demonstrate that in the 1520s in the ducal court of his native Ferrara the publisher Zoppino was commonly referred to as 'lo Zupin che canta in banco', and already in 1510 he had been in trouble with Venice, for having both sung and sold, in Ferrara, a poem against La Serenissima. The poem was probably his rare *Barzoleta*, in whose last three strophes 'el Zopin', before asking 'dui quatrin' from his listeners, states he is singing 'alo improviso'.[32]

Moreover, when acting as a talent scout, the charlatan-publisher Zoppino was also pleased to take on other performers and improvisers. In the early 1520s, for instance, one of the main authors of his team was Niccolò degli Agostini, a poet linked at first to the duke of Mantua, Francesco Gonzaga, and then to the *condottiero* Bartolomeo d'Alviano. Agostini is not unknown to modern scholars, chiefly for being the author, well before Ariosto, of the first sequel to Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*: he published the first book of his continuation in 1505 (eleven years before the first edition of the *Orlando furioso*), and the third and last probably in 1521, certainly by 1524. Precisely in those years, from 1520 to 1522, Zoppino published at least five works in *ottava rima* authored by Agostini: apart from the final book of the sequel, they were a compilation of poems on the contemporary wars from 1509 to 1521 entitled *Li successi bellici seguiti nella*

Italia, a translation of *Tutti gli libri de Ovidio Metamorphoseos* (whose text was used by Tiziano in painting his *Danae* and his *Andromeda*), an *Innamoramento* of Lancelot and Guinevere, and *Le horrende bataglie de' romani*.

The last work is nothing other than a version in *ottava rima* of the first book of the *Reali di Francia*, exactly the same story sung in Florence few years before, in a very different version, by the Altissimo. Indeed, the two poets knew each other and possibly fraternized in the early 1520s: 'Nicolaus de Augustinis venetus' is the author of one of the stanzas eulogizing the Florentine improviser in the Venetian *Opera dello Altissimo* (fol. I3^{r}). Actually, the links between them are even deeper than these. If we read the first and the last work of the previous list of publications, we will not probably remain transfixed by their monotonous style and repetitious devices, but we will certainly discover that they are both presented as being composed by Agostini on Zoppino's demand, and both *all'improvvisa*. The statement appears once in the *Ultimo et fine de tutti li libri de Orlando inamorato* ('composta ho a l'improvisa questa historia | in dieci dì, [...] per il mio Zopino', VII. 96. 6-7) and twice in the *Orrende battaglie* adapted from the *Reali* (I. v. 1. 5-7 and I. v. 74. 6-8):[33]

> In merto di mie fatiche tante
> il premio arò dal mio Zopin saputo;
> che, ben a l'improvisa fatta sia,
> la presente opra è pur de Dio, non mia.
> [...]
> In nel secondo libro assai più immenso
> a l'improvisa spero de dir cose

che al vulgo seran molto dilettose.

Therefore, Niccolò degli Agostini was an improviser, too. One could wonder, at this point, whether Pietro Aretino could also have been an improviser, at least in the first stages of his career, when he presented his *Opera nova* to the reader as a collection of 'cose fatte quasi in uno instante' (fol. A1^{v}). It is difficult to say, but he might well have been. Indeed, in his fifth book of *Letters*, we read that in Rome, more than ten years after the *Opera nova*, in the presence of Pope Clement VII, the young Pietro was declared 'un altro me' by an older Aretino, Bernardo Accolti, already mentioned, called 'l'Unico Aretino' (until then), one of the most successful improvisers in the courtly circles of that time. The episode is narrated by Pietro in a letter addressed to the secretary of the Unico's nephew, Benedetto Accolti:

> Non è miracolo che le cose da me produtte respirino, avendo io, come si sa, ereditato la terribilità de i concetti, la novità de lo stile e la beltà de le parole, con che già empì di stupore il mondo il suo immortale Zio. […]
>
> A ciò si vedesse il come io ero del suo intelletto fattura, disse al Settimo Clemente, l'ultima sera che recitasse in Palazzo, dissegli voltandosi a me, in presenza di tutta la Corte: 'Ecco, Pastore Santo, ch'io mi rallegro dinanzi a voi, da che dopo di me lascio un altro me ne la patria.'[34]

If the Unico, during his last show, in front of a huge crowd, chose Pietro as his artistic heir (or, at least, if Pietro decided to describe himself as such), it is hardly possible that he did not practise the Unico's typical art: that of improvised poetry.

What is certain, however, is that the young Pietro Aretino was at least a poet-performer. Thus he is portrayed in a letter addressed to him on 1 October 1540 by Niccolò Martelli, who recalls the old days when they had met 'in Roma, sedendo Lione X', and Pietro fascinated him with the sound of his own poems:

> Visitato da me nel superbo giardino del Magn. Agostin Chigi, […] recitandomi ora 'Se Lucrezia fu bella, il sa il Tiranno', e ora 'Alma mia donna & fiamma', […] ne invaghiste tanto col suono delle vostre rime eccellenti, di cui ancora tutta Roma stupiva.[35]

There is a striking resemblance between this image of Rome, amazed by the 'suono' of Aretino's verse recalled by Martelli, and that of Florence resounding in the same years with the Altissimo's *improvviso*, evoked by Giunta in my opening quotation. From a certain point of view, Pietro pittore and Cristofano scultore seem like two peas in a pod, even though the first had more success in the courts, the second in the streets.

Their paths run parallel for some years, but just when they start overlapping in the same place, death divides them. The 'Altissimo Cristofano Fiorentino' died about 1526, probably in Venice, where Manenti later published his chivalric *Primo libro*. In 1527, Venice became the adopted homeland of the 'Divino Pietro Aretino', who was composing his chivalric *Marfisa*. Soon after, joining his abilities as a witty and swift writer to the communicative power of the

Venetian book industry, he would emerge as one of the most influential (and wealthiest) authors of the Italian Renaissance.

We generally perceive Pietro Aretino as a writer, precisely as we perceive Leonardo da Vinci as a painter, Niccolò Zoppino as a publisher, and Cristoforo l'Altissimo as a *canterino* – an improviser singing *cantari* and lyric poems. And yet, following the itineraries of the Altissimo's texts, we discover that these apparently vastly different men developed their particular identities on the basis of very similar backgrounds and features in common. Further research will help us understand how many differences are real and how many are due to the different historiographical traditions that have dealt with these figures. In any case, by now we can surely affirm that the background and features that they shared were those of oral poets, who created and recited verse in a culture in which the most normal, complete and effective *medium* for creating and spreading poetry, while the printing press was rising, was still the human singing voice.

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[1] Iacopo Sannazzaro, *Arcadia* (Florence: Filippo Giunta, 1514/15), fol. a1^{v}.

[2] Marin Sanudo, *I diarii*, 58 vols (Venice: Visentini, 1879-1903; repr. Bologna: Forni, 1969-1979), XXV, 391.

[3] Luca Degl'Innocenti, *I 'Reali' dell'Altissimo: un ciclo di cantari fra oralità e scrittura* (Florence: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 2008). Important pages on the topic had been written by Rodolfo Renier, 'Introduzione', in *Strambotti e sonetti*

dell'Altissimo, ed. by R. Renier (Turin: Società Bibliofila, 1886), pp. ix-xlvii; Paola Ventrone, *Gli araldi della commedia: teatro a Firenze nel Rinascimento* (Pisa: Pacini, 1993), pp. 108-14; Dale Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's Œuvre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 43-54.

[4] See nevertheless Brian Richardson, *Manuscript Culture in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 226-58.

[5] See Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 30-98; Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 52-87; James Miles Foley, *How to 'Read' an 'Oral' Poem* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), pp. 109-24 (also for references to previous works).

[6] The concept of 'oral residue' is fundamental in Walter J. Ong's works on orality; for a definition, see his 'Oral Residue in Tudor Prose Style', in *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971), pp. 23-47 (pp. 25-26) (first publ. in *PMLA*, 80 (1965), 145-54).

[7] The twentieth-century editions continued to reprint the traditional anonymous text notwithstanding the availability of a pioneering critical edition – Andrea da Barberino, *I reali di Francia*, ed. by Giuseppe Vandelli, 2 vols (Bologna: Romagnoli-Dall'Acqua, 1892-1900), completed in the edition by Giovanni Gambarin (Bari: Laterza, 1947). On the publishing success of this novel, see Mario Infelise, 'Il libro a stampa: un nuovo prodotto', in *L'italiano nelle regioni: lingua nazionale e identità regionali*, ed. by Francesco Bruni (Turin: UTET,

1992), pp. 957-96 (pp. 961-63). On the author, see Gloria Allaire, *Andrea da Barberino and the Language of Chivalry* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997) and Marco Villoresi, *La letteratura cavalleresca: dai cicli medievali all'Ariosto*, (Rome: Carocci, 2000), pp. 63-80.

[8] See Degl'Innocenti, *I 'Reali' dell'Altissimo*, pp. 169-90. Ficino's vernacular text is published in *Supplementum Ficinianum: Marsilii Ficini florentini philosophi platonici opuscula inedita et dispersa*, ed. by Paul Oscar Kristeller, 2 vols (Florence: Olschki, 1937), II, 128-68. The woodcut is part of the famous set that illustrated the vernacular version (by Sebastiano Manilio) of Johannes de Ketham's *Fasciculus medicinae* starting from the edition of Venice: Giovanni and Gregorio de' Gregori, 1493/4, fol. $b2^{r}$ (visible online at <http://archive.nlm.nih.gov/proj/ttp/kethamgallery.htm>, p. [15] [accessed 16 June 2014]).

[9] *Il primo libro de' Reali de m. Cristoforo Fiorentino detto Altissimo, poeta laureato, cantato da lui all'improviso* (Venice: Giovanni Antonio Niccolini da Sabbio, 1534).

[10] Degl'Innocenti, *I 'Reali' dell'Altissimo*, pp. 92-95 and 241-71.

[11] On the *generici*, the use of literature, and other oral features of *commedia dell'arte*, see Robert Henke, *Performance and Literature in the Commedia dell'Arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 31-49; on the modular structure of their performances, see Richard Andrews, *Script and Scenarios: The Performance of Comedy in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 175-99. On courtly poets' repetitive variations on a theme, see Vincenzo Calmeta, 'La poesia del Tebaldeo', in *Prose e*

lettere edite e inedite, ed. by Cecil Grayson (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1959), pp. 15-19 (p. 16).

[12] For the last three features, see respectively Degl'Innocenti, *I 'Reali' dell'Altissimo*, pp. 97-103, 202-09, and 103-14.

[13] For some references, see Luca Degl'Innocenti, '*Verba manent*: precisazioni e supplementi d'indagine sulla trascrizione dell'oralità nei cantari dell'Altissimo', *Rassegna europea di letteratura italiana*, 39 (2012), 109-34 (pp. 110-12).

[14] Degl'Innocenti, *I 'Reali' dell'Altissimo*, pp. 65-72. See also Marzia Pieri, *Lo Strascino da Siena e la sua opera poetica e teatrale* (Pisa: ETS, 2010), pp. 25-26, n. 52.

[15] Peter Burke, 'Oral Culture and Print Culture in Renaissance Italy', *Arv: Nordic Yearbook of Folklore*, 54 (1998), 7-18 (p. 15); Rosa Salzberg, 'In the Mouth of Charlatans: Street Performers and the Dissemination of Pamphlets in Renaissance Italy', *Renaissance Studies*, 24 (2010), 638-53; Rosa Salzberg and Massimo Rospocher, 'Street Singers in Italian Renaissance Urban Culture and Communication', *Cultural and Social History* 9 (2012), 9-26; Marco Villoresi, 'Zanobi della Barba, canterino ed editore del Rinascimento', in *Il cantare italiano fra folklore e letteratura*, ed. by Michelangelo Picone and Luisa Rubini (Florence: Olschki, 2007), pp. 461-73.

[16] The epigram *De Antonio Tusco extemporali poeta* is published in Angelo Poliziano, *Prose volgari inedite e poesie latine e greche edite e inedite*, ed. by Isidoro Del Lungo (Florence: Barbera, 1867), p. 21. On Antonio di Guido, see Paolo Orvieto, *Pulci medievale: studio sulla poesia volgare fiorentina del Quattrocento* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1978), pp. 178-86; Marco Villoresi,

'Panoramica sui poeti performativi d'età laurenziana', *Rassegna europea di letteratura italiana*, 34 (2009), 11-33.

[17] See Lorenz Böninger, 'Ricerche sugli inizi della stampa fiorentina (1471-1473)', *La Bibliofilìa*, 105 (2003), 225-48; Piero Scapecchi, 'Una dibattuta questione: da [Napoli, tipografia del Terentius] a [Firenze, Niccolò di Lorenzo per Antonio di Guido]. Sull'identificazione e la localizzazione di una ignota tipografia', *Rara volumina*, 14 (2007), 5-11.

[18] Florence, Archivio di Stato, Registri delle deliberazioni de' Signori e Collegi, 1515, fol. 5[r]. See Cesare Guasti, 'Privilegio concesso dalla Signoria di Firenze all'Altissimo per la stampa della sua *Rotta di Ravenna*', *Giornale storico degli Archivi toscani*, 3 (1859), 69.

[19] Venice, Archivio di Stato, Senato Terra, R. 21, fol. 53[v]. See Renier, p. xxxiv.

[20] *Opera dello Altissimo poeta Fiorentino, poeta laureato, cioè Stramotti, Sonetti, Capitoli, Epigrammi* (Venice: [Guglielmo da Fontaneto], [1520?]); *Sonetti, capitoli e strambotti dello Altissimo poeta fiorentino* (Florence: Bernardo Zucchetta for Bernardo Pacini, 1525). In the second half of the century, a substantially enriched collection of *Opere dell'Altissimo* was reprinted in Florence at least five times.

[21] See Antonio Rossi, *Serafino Aquilano e la poesia cortigiana* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1980), Antonio Rossi, 'Lirica volgare del primo Cinquecento: alcune annotazioni', in *Forme e vicende per Giovanni Pozzi*, ed. by Ottavio Besomi and others (Padua: Antenore, 1988), pp. 123-57; Giuseppe Gerbino, 'Il canto di Serafino e il dilemma degli umanisti', in *L'attore del Parnaso: profili di attori-*

musici e drammaturgie d'occasione, ed. by Francesca Bortoletti (Milan: Mimesis, 2012), pp. 315-44.

[22] See Vincenzo Calmeta, *Vita del facondo poeta vulgare Serafino Aquilano*, in *Prose e lettere*, pp. 60-77 (p. 62): 'non solo recitava le soe composizioni, ma davane copia tanta'.

[23] Bernardo Filostrato, *Del Philolauro: Solacciosa comedia* (Bologna: Girolamo Benedetti, 1520); Bernardo Filostrato, *Nella morte dello illustriss. Iuliano Medice degnissimo duca di Nemor* (Florence: Antonio Tubini and Andrea Ghirlandi, 1516).

[24] ([Florence]: [n. pub.], [*c.* 1505]). To my knowledge, only two copies survive: one in the Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, and the other in the library of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, FOAN TES 855, which is the one I have analysed (I am most grateful to Dr Lucia Sardo for her kind help). For a description and a reproduction of the first page, see Max Sander, *Le Livre à figures italien depuis 1467 jusqu'à 1530: essai de sa bibliographie et de son histoire*, 6 vols (Milan: Hoepli, 1940), I, 396 and VI, fig. 590; Tammaro de Marinis, *Catalogue d'une collection d'anciens livres à figures italiens* (Milan: Hoepli, 1925), p. 23 and fig. LXXII. The booklet is also catalogued in *La vita nei libri: edizioni illustrate a stampa del Quattro e Cinquecento dalla Fondazione Giorgio Cini*, ed. by Marino Zorzi (Mariano del Friuli: Edizioni della Laguna, [2003]), p. 237, where an attempt is made to identify the author with 'Giovanni Cristofano, romano', a sculptor and poet who died in 1512, who does not seem to have any link with Altissimo's poems (on him, see Matteo Ceriana, 'Giovanni Cristoforo Ganti', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana,

1960-), 52 (1999), pp. 203-11). The edition of the *Capitolo primo* has also been studied by Simona Periti, 'Contributo alla bibliografia fiorentina del XVI secolo: le edizioni dal 1501 al 1530' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Università degli Studi di Udine, 2003), p. 68, who identifies the text-types with the one used by Bartolomeo de' Libri and then by Giovanni Stefano di Carlo in the very first years of the sixteenth century.

[25] Degl'Innocenti, *I 'Reali' dell'Altissimo*, p. 181 n. 14. On Mondino in Leonardo, see Domenico Laurenza, *De figura umana: fisiognomica, anatomia e arte in Leonardo* (Florence: Olschki, 2001), *ad indicem*; on the likelihood that one of the woodcuts in the Italian editions of Ketham's *Fasciculus* had its source in a drawing by Leonardo (Windsor Castle, Royal Library, 12597^{r}), see *Leonardo da Vinci Master Draftsman*, ed. by Carmen C. Bambach (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 408-12.

[26] Leonardo da Vinci, *Anatomical Drawings from the Royal Collection* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1977), pp. 46-54, and Frank Zöllern and Johannes Nathan, *Leonardo da Vinci 1452-1519*, vol. II, *The Graphic Work* (Köln: Taschen, 2011), pp. 467-69.

[27] See respectively Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. XVII. 17, fol. 88^{r} (also in *Il Codice Magliabechiano*, ed. by Carl Frey (Berlin: Grote'sche, 1892; repr. Farnborough: Gregg, 1969), p. 110); Paolo Giovio, *Leonardi Vincii vita*, in *Scritti d'arte del Cinquecento*, ed. by Paola Barocchi, 3 vols (Milan: Ricciardi, 1971), I, 7-9 (p. 9); Luca Pacioli, *Divina proportione* (Venice: Paganino Paganini, 1509), fol. E4^{v}. On this topic, see Emanuel Winternitz, *Leonardo da Vinci as a Musician* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

[28] Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, ed. by Rosanna Bettarini and Paola Barocchi (Florence: Sansoni, then SPES, 1966-87), IV, 16 and 24.

[29] See Pieri, p. 16, n. 26.

[30] *Opera nova del fecundissimo giovene Pietro pictore Arretino, zoe strambotti, sonetti, capitoli, barzellette et una disperata* (Venice: Niccolò Zoppino, 1512). See Roberto Fedi, '"Juvenilia" aretiniani', in *Pietro Aretino nel quinto centenario della nascita*, 2 vols (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1995), I, 87-119; Giuliano Innamorati, *Pietro Aretino: studi e note critiche* (Messina and Florence: D'Anna, 1957), pp. 93-123 (first publ. in *Paragone*, 60 (1954), 46-58).

[31] *Opere nuove dell'Altissimo poeta fiorentino, dove si lauda una donna dal capo alli piedi: et altri strambocti bellissimi, composti da' più varii auctori* (Florence: Antonio Tubini for Bartolomeo Castelli, 1524). See Antonio Rossi, 'A4 sull'*Opera Nova* di Pietro Aretino', *Studi e problemi di critica testuale*, 44 (1992), 45-51 (p. 48).

[32] For the latter reference, see the essay by Massimo Rospocher in the present volume, pp. 000-00; for the former, see Camilla Cavicchi, 'Musici, cantori e "cantimbanchi" a corte al tempo dell'*Orlando furioso*', in *L'uno e l'altro Ariosto: in corte e nelle delizie*, ed. by Gianni Venturi (Florence: Olschki, 2011), pp. 263-89 (p. 282); Luca Degl'Innocenti, 'Testo e immagini nei continuatori dell'Ariosto: il caso uno e trino della *Marfisa* di Pietro Aretino illustrata coi legni del *Furioso* Zoppino', *Schifanoia*, 34-35 (2008), 193-203 (pp. 196-97). On his activity as a publisher, see Neil Harris, *Un ferrarese a Venezia: Niccolò d'Aristotele de' Rossi detto Zoppino*, in *I libri di 'Orlando innamorato'*, ed. by Antonia Tissoni

Benvenuti (Ferrara: ISR; Modena: Panini, 1987), pp. 88-159; Luigi Severi, *Sitibondo nel stampar de' libri: Niccolò Zoppino tra libro volgare, letteratura cortigiana e questione della lingua* (Manziana: Vecchiarelli, 2009); Lorenzo Baldacchini, *Alle origini dell'editoria in volgare: Niccolò Zoppino da Ferrara a Venezia. Annali (1503-1544)* (Manziana: Vecchiarelli, 2011) (reviewed by Neil Harris, *The Library*, 7th ser., 14 (2013), 213-17).

[33] For the quotation from the *Inamorato*, see Neil Harris, *Bibliografia dell''Orlando Innamorato'*, 2 vols (Modena: Panini, 1988-1991), II, 89. For the others, see Niccolò degli Agostini, *Le horrende bataglie de Romani in ottava rima contra Infideli e come Dio mandò a Fiovo il stendardo de oro e fiama* (Venice: Niccolò Zoppino and Vincenzo di Paolo, 1520), fols F1^{r} and F4^{v}; the composition 'a pettition de Vincentio gentile | e del mio caro Nicolò Zopino' is reaffirmed in the very last stanza of the work, II. VI. 144. 2-3 (fol. O3^{v}); the only known copy is Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, A.27.5.Poet.

[34] Pietro Aretino, *Lettere*, ed. by Paolo Procaccioli, 6 vols (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1997-2003), V (2001), 81-82. See also Danilo Romei, 'Dalla Toscana a Roma: Pietro Aretino "erede" di Bernardo Accolti', in *Pietro Aretino nel cinquecentenario della nascita*, 2 vols (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1995), I, 179-95, which investigates more the similarities in social behaviour than in poetic craft. Notably, both the Aretines, 'Pietro' and 'Unico' appear, alongside Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, in a woodcut border used in the title page of Dante Alighieri, *Commedia* (Venice: Lucantonio Giunta, 1529). The proposal of such an unorthodox canon of Italian vernacular authors is most likely linked to Pietro Aretino's strategy of self-promotion: see Brian Richardson, 'A Series of Woodcut

Borders in Early Sixteenth-Century Venetian Title-Pages, and the Career of Pietro Aretino', *La Bibliofilia*, 103 (2001), 137-64.

[35] Niccolò Martelli, *Il primo libro delle Lettere* (Florence: [Anton Francesco Doni for] Niccolò Martelli, 1546), fol. B2[r].